

Journal of Education and Practice
ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online)
Vol 3, No 2, 2012

www.iiste.org

Effective Leadership: Tool for Achieving Political Stability and National Development in Nigeria

Lucky Idowu Ojo
Department of Mass Communication
Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, P.M.B 13,
Edo State, Nigeria,
Tel: 07066711684, 08027079859 E-mail: Lio4christ07@yahoo.com

Blessing Barakatu Ojo (correspondent author)
Registry Department,
Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, P.M.B 13,
Edo state, Nigeria,
Tel: +2347039405151 E-mail: Obb4christ@yahoo.com

Abstract

Since gaining political independence in 1960, Nigeria like other developing Countries of the world has virtually become poorer and under-developed while nations in the developed World have become richer and more developed in all ramifications. Implicated in the Under-development of these Countries now described as 'third world countries' is ineffective leadership that has also lead to 'bad governance', lack of 'best practices', a myriad of intimidating problems and a differing forms of conflicts that borders on a variety of factors and magnitudes. In this paper therefore, we examined leadership as a concept in Nigeria's governance. Leadership constitutes the backbone of management. The study argues that ineffective leadership is at the heart of Nigeria's under-development and opines that effective leadership can be used to achieve political stability and engender growth and development of the nation. The study further argues that effective leadership will help to reverse the nation's drift and slide to anarchy. The study adopted the theoretical approach as its methodology and finds that there is an incontrovertible evidence of the failure of successive governments in the process of leadership in the developing countries. It concludes by calling on all Nigerian leaders to step-up their effort at communicating vision and also initiate change. The paper recommends among others that Nigeria should adopt leadership styles that conduce to optimal human resource productivity to achieve the much desired development in this century.

Keywords: Effective Leadership; Political stability; National Development; Nigeria.

1.0 Introduction

In Nigeria and other developing nations, the issue of effective leadership and political stability has become a hot-button issue. Since emerging as an independent nation in 1960, Nigeria has struggled to fashion out a political system that would guarantee an orderly society as well as clearly defined methods for settling conflicts and for sharing whatever collectively belongs to the people.

It has been a struggle to establish a system that would handle unemployment, protect the basic rights of citizens, promote their culture and unity, provide basic infrastructure and services, electricity, water supply, healthcare and many others which are yet elusive, establish shared aspirations and how those aspirations would be pursued. (Usua 2010).

To promote political stability that could engender development of Nigeria and other developing nations in the West Africa sub-region, there must be an effective leadership. In contemporary Nigeria today, effective leadership is a prime value, the most valuable 'public good' but yet the most elusive. In an increasingly changing and globalized world of today, leadership is the most visible aspect of management with its potential of transforming the workforce into a willing and winning team with the appropriate synergy to actualize collectively determined corporate objectives. It is pertinent therefore, to note that we cannot function without leaders and that our quality of life depends on the quality of our leaders and the stability of our political administrations. Furthermore, quality leadership is a key to a prosperous and peaceful life and nation. It is obvious that Nigeria is painfully in need of quality leaders. Munroe (1984)

opines that “God’s answer to all our social, moral and economic problems is qualified, just, and righteous leaders”.

We must agree that our generation lives in a swirling tide of events, dreams, promises, threats and changing ideals about the present and future. Our century is politically speaking an interesting one, the bloodiest, and the most unpredictable of any century in history. This confluence of strange conditions presses this generation to desire effective leadership and political stability.

Interestingly, added to this bleak environment is the painful reality that over the past few decades, there seems to have been a dramatic leadership vacuum in Nigeria and in the third World countries. In every sphere of the African continent, there is an absence of quality, stable and effective leadership. In the political, civic, economic, social and spiritual arenas, recent events indicate that previous generations have produced a poor quality of characters that fade in the presence of true leadership and leave our present generation in this same leadership vacuum.

The recent fall of governments in several Africa countries, the exposure of corruption and unethical activities among political leaders and the covert conspiracies of government betraying their own people is evidence that this lack of quality leadership is affecting every sphere of our lives. (Munroe 1984)

It is in this regard that we, as stewards of this present age, must face the challenge of identifying, developing, training, and raising a generation of leaders who would secure the future for our children, and their children.

2.0 Concept of Leadership

Everyone will give you a different answer to this question. As a result, there is now a multiplicity of the definition of leadership in management texts and general interest publications. Oshionebo & Ariyo (2007) uphold that leadership relates to exerting influence among a group of people so that the collective purposes of that group will be achieved and optimally too. That “group” could be the entire world, a country or a part there- of, or a club, and similar outfit.

According to Munroe (1984), “leadership is like beauty, it’s hard to define but you know it when you see it”. More, leaders he argues are “ordinary people who accept or are placed under extra ordinary circumstances that bring forth their latent potential, producing a character that inspires the confidence and trust of others”. Our country today is in desperate need of such individuals. Africa is in need of competent and effective leaders today.

Leadership is the most visible aspect and highest prospect of management. Newstrom & Bittel (2002) defined leadership as “the process of influencing and supporting others to follow you and to do willingly the things that need to be done”. Boone & Kurtz (1984) agrees with this definition when they noted that leadership is “the function by which a manager unleashes the available resources in order to get the organization to carry out plans to accomplish objectives” or the act of motivating or causing people to perform certain tasks intended to achieve specified objectives”. They further noted that leadership is “the acts of making things happen”. Therefore, leadership is impossible without a guiding vision and purpose that generates passion for accomplishment. Leadership derives its power from values, deep convictions and correct principles.

According to Oyedijo (1995), “leadership is the management task that is concerned with how to influence the behaviour of subordinates”. Therefore, to optimize the utilitarian value of the “organizational personnel” requires providing leadership, especially in an ever-changing environment where planning and periodic review of plans become imperative.

In summary, leadership involves the use of power which is “the ability of one person to influence the behaviour of another. A leader is a person appointed or elected by an organisation to exercise a power delegated to her by that organization. This power may be addressed to any or all of three very general and related functions:

- *establishing the goals, purposes or objectives of the organization;*
- *creating the structures through which the objective are fulfilled and*
- *maintaining or enhancing these structures*

The exercise of power or influence implies “making things happen” through others. Leaders may engage in a number of activities in furthering this purpose. They may co-ordinate, control, direct, guide or mobilize, they may counsel, support, help, persuade or elicit the participation of others. Leaders may also cajole, manipulate, entice, reward, or coerce their sub-ordinates.

From the foregoing definitions of leadership, a common trend to be seen among the various interpretations of leadership is that it relates to exerting influence among a group of people so that the collective purposes of that group will be achieved optimally. This factor is a scarce commodity among the self – acclaimed leaders especially in Nigeria and the West Africa sub – region.

Perhaps, we should also observe that “leadership” is an acknowledged component of the basic functions of management along with planning, organizing and controlling. Leadership is sometimes called “directing” or “integrating” in the management process, leadership is exerted across these other functions but it is particularly related to planning, which, as Oshionebo & Ariyo (2007), puts it, involves:

- *establishing organizational objectives,*
- *determining the plans to accomplish desired organizational objectives,*
- *working out the strategies, programmes, procedures and standard methods to guide workers,*
- *developing schedules to keep the work moving towards the objectives, and*
- *adjusting plans periodically in the light of new information and changes in operating conditions.*

From the foregoing discuss on leadership, it is to be argued that leadership entails the ability to inspire other people to work towards the attainment of a common goal. Leadership is therefore vital in any organization or community because a manager must use it to secure the co-operation of his subordinates. With the co-operation of subordinates, decisions could be converted into actions and results obtained.

3.0 Concept of National Development

Development is a word that has continued to receive diverse interpretation and explanation among scholars and researchers. The concept, as a result, suffers from a surfeit of meaning. Also, there is no generally acceptable operational definition of what development is, nor is there a consensus regarding how development can be pursued. This can be attributed to the multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary and value-orientation of the concept.

Development, in its most simplistic definition means progress. It presupposes change for the better. Development is dynamic; it is a continuum, changing with situations. It represents transformation from a primitive to a civilized one. It refers to an increase in the earnings of a nation and consequent increase in its foreign exchange earnings. It also refers to an increase in the standard and quality of lives of the people. In intellectual circles, development has a multi-angular definition, though this multi-angularity converges towards same point. According to (Rodney 1974), it would include the individual in the society. Opubor (1985), agrees with Rodney when he opines that “There can be no far-reaching social change unless it affects the lives of the majority of people” Similarly, national development refers to the gradual manifestation of positive changes in the economic, industrial, political, social- cultural and administrative life of a country. It involves large quantity and high quality of productive resources as well as deficiency in using them. National development according to (Ogai 2003), “deals with human endowments, natural/physical, psychological and other factors”, national development goes beyond having plenty of money, it embraces all aspects of social behaviour such as the establishment of law and order, resourcefulness in business dealings, honesty in business relations, sophistication, broadmindedness, familiarity with science, modern technology and mechanical gadgets and overall positive national outlook. National development has three major aspects;

- * Economic and social aspect,
- * Political and cultural aspect and
- * Industrial and administrative aspect.

The forgoing discussion, suggest that individual is a contributing member of the society and his self-improvement is tantamount to improvement of the society. Thus, the individual and his society are intricately linked. The thrust of this argument is that human resources are most valuable assets any nation can possess to advance economically, socially as well as politically, to develop. It stands to reason therefore, that whatever needs to be done to make human resources to operate at the optimal level should be encouraged.

4.0 Important Leadership Traits

Management scholars have noted several factors which consistently seem to differentiate between effective and ineffective leaders. The most important traits of good leaders are the following:

- Energy: Good leaders have a high level of personal drive and enthusiasm. They demonstrate a strong work ethic before they ask others to dedicate themselves.
- Desire: Effective leaders have personal aspirations to rise to leadership position, and the desire to guide others to greater achievements.
- Integrity: Fidelity, strength of character, and credibility are their hallmarks. Good leaders set high ethical and moral standards for themselves, and live up to them conspicuously. Their words, supported by their actions, send clear messages to others about the type of behaviour they expect.
- Self – confidence: Leaders feel good about their past performance and future capabilities. They have appropriate levels of self – esteem, projected through self – assurance in their actions and decisions.
- Judgment: Careful analysis and thoughtful consideration precede most actions by effective leaders. However, they can still be decisive when the situation calls for it.

The argument here is that effective leaders should possess capacity for self management; strong inner achievement, drive, a high sense of responsibility; ability for group work and personal charm. Regrettably, these are virtues that are scarce commodity among leaders of Nigeria and several developing nations. These have combined to put a question mark on the development of this nation.

The absence of an effective leadership is thus a factor which has robbed Nigeria of its greatness despite enormous resources and abundant potentials. This is a sad commentary on the story of Nigeria as a nation taking into consideration that at independence in 1960, Nigeria was lumped together with Brazil and India as former colonies which would within a little time join the front row of the world economy. Today, while Brazil has overtaken its former coloniser Portugal and many European countries in GDP rating, most of the foreign multinationals in Nigeria, in contrast, have collapsed while others have left for saner climes.

Ironically, those who led the nation and pulled it down the ditch of depression are still holding sway in its governance. In the words of (Nnanna 2011), “Nigeria has been wandering in the wilderness for 50 years”. Currently, the Nigerian economy is ranked 44th in the world in terms of GDP, after South Africa and Egypt. Similarly, the country fell to 129 on the World Bank knowledge economic index (KEI). The U. N. Human Development Index further revealed that the country’s poverty level went up from 28.17 percent in 1980 to 70 percent 2010. Thus, justifying the saying that “when the head is rotten, the body decays” This scenario again captures the centrality of leadership in the theory of management. The leader holds the door key and makes all the difference by good leadership.

5.0 Leadership Styles and Concepts

The selection of a way to lead and how to use available power is known as leadership style. A leader is the most influential person in an organization who provides direction, guides group activities and ensures that group objectives are attained. The function of leadership pervades all organizations. An effective leader therefore, is one who is capable of persuading others to move enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals.

Writing on leadership styles, (Nwachukwu 1988), posit that empirical research studies conducted by Lewin, Lippitt and white of the university of Iowa identified three major leadership styles namely, autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic. The democratic leader gets members involved in decision making by guiding them to determine how the group functions. The autocratic leader provides the direction and determines policy, while the laissez-faire leader allows people in the group to determine their own direction and function without involvement. In choosing a leadership style, a keen sensitivity to the individuals and circumstances involved should be carefully assessed. The concept of situational leadership prescribed by Dr. Fiedler opens our mind to the wisdom of selecting a style that is most suitable for the individuals and circumstances involved.

6.0 Theoretical Framework

There are many leadership theories but the two distinct groupings are the early or traditional theory and the more contemporary, situational viewpoints. However, it must be noted that there are no one best way to lead. Leadership styles vary according to situations and it is usual to find managers who combine two or more styles and use them on different occasions. This implies that managers must avoid the ‘permanence fallacy of leadership’, the idea that a particular style fits all time and situations. This is the beauty of the situational or contingency approach.

Social scientists have studied leadership for only a few decades with the hope of finding some simple theory that was easy to understand, teach, learn and practice. For a long time, people clung to the

theory that “leaders are born, not made”. Finding someone with the right trait was the key. Then there was “leaders are made, not born”. With this theory, anyone could be thrown into a situation and become a leader.

These simple theories are giving way to the realization that leadership style is a complicated matter. Research has shown that numerous factors affect a manager’s choice of the proper leadership style. This selection process is often represented by the following equation: leadership style = f (the leader, subordinates, and situation). Leadership style is therefore, a function of these three variables. (Boone & Kurtze 1984).

In discussing leadership style, Douglas MacGregor, late professor of industrial management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in his book, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, offers two basic assumption called Theory X and Theory Y.

Theory X is based on the following set of implicit assumptions about human nature and human behaviour.

1. The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if possible.
2. Because of this human characteristic of dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed or threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives..
3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, and wants security above all.

Theory Y finds its roots in recently accumulated and emerging knowledge about human behaviour. It is based on the following set of assumption:

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest.
2. External control and threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward organizational objectives. Individuals will exercise self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed.
3. Commitment to objectives depends on the rewards associated with their achievement. The most important rewards are those that satisfy needs for self-respect and personal improvement.
4. The average human beings learn, under proper conditions, not only to accept but also to seek responsibility.
5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population among both men and women.
6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially realized.

In Mcgregors mind, the ability to help employees to discover goals consistent with those of the organization is the essence of leadership. Consequently, Theory Y, along with the leadership roles that it implies, is far more in tune with today’s employees than is theory X and autocratic style of leadership it implies.

On the basis of the forgoing statements and previous arguments, this study is hinged on the contingency or situational model of leadership, i.e. the belief that the leadership style that will be most effective in a given situation can be predicted by examining the intensity of three interacting factors viz:

- That leaders should examine the quality of leader-member relations or rapport and good feelings between the supervisor and those supervised
- That leaders should examine the level of structure in the job, in terms of how carefully procedures and specifications must be followed,
- And the amount of real power invested in the supervisor by his or her superiors. The model then bench-marked this assessment with research results to see if authoritative or democratic or participative style is ideal for situation at hand.

6.1 Leadership and Political Stability in Nigeria

When Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, there were very high hopes of its potential for sustainable growth and development. According to Bello – Imam and Abubakre (2009,p.1), “the hopes were based on its substantial natural resource endowment, the existence of a competent civil service,

favourable growth rate and above all, one of Africa's most educated elite. The economic potentials of the nation received a big fillip with the advent of petroleum oil in commercial quantities as from the 1970s---".

Regrettably, these immense human, material and fiscal resources as well as potentials failed to transmute into visible socio-economic growth and development, instead, the huge and large petroleum oil driven national revenue and foreign exchange earnings were grossly mismanaged to the extent that Nigeria has remained stagnant economically in terms of overall national development.

Implicated in the inexorable slide from a country with the most promising development prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa to virtually the status of a failed state are a plethora of political, economic and social – cultural factors. These factors are epitomised by fiscal indiscipline manifested in unsustainable fiscal deficit, pervasive corruption in all sectors of the national economy, gross disregard for the rule of law and due process, a systematic culture of impunity occasioned by the militarisation of the political space and abject poverty of a majority of the citizenry precipitated by a persistent culture of microeconomic mismanagement among others.

Following from the culture of poor and ineffective political leadership therefore, the country has kept jumping from one problem to another.

The citizenry have over the years been experiencing the worst, compared with their counterparts in some other countries of the world. This is so because virtually all the means that could be exploited to extricate Nigeria from her diverse problems are being blocked with the undoing's of Nigerian self – appointed or elected leaders.

As a result, the nation's political system is fast collapsing, caused mainly by lack of effective, visionary and efficient leadership. The military, capitalising on the first army putsch of 1966, has since entrenched itself in the country's polity albeit in the disguise of democracy. The Nigerian social system has equally broken down. The extent of damage seems to make possible solutions almost inconceivable. The poor state or non – availability of social infrastructures and amenities in many parts of the country has constantly thrown the country into a state of anomie (Ogunlami 1999)

Ironically, many West African sub region countries that often look up to Nigeria for succour do not experience acute lack of the above social facilities as Nigeria.

Nigeria as a result, has registered herself as a laughing stock to the outside world with her inability to effectively manage the wealth that nature has endowed her with. Her economic system is awful and lacks the capacity to promote and sustain growth and development. Stupendously blessed with both human and material resources, the country still operates a monolithic economy. Again, the vices of corruption have taken over every facet of Nigeria's life, and have consequently impaired the sense of planning of those at the helm of affair.

More, chronic economic problems like huge foreign debts and poor budgetary system persists. Thus, poverty, seems to have therefore, pitched its tent with the ordinary Nigerian and has rendered him helpless and frustrated. His instinct for survival thus, makes him crime prone.

While bemoaning the fate of a nation he tagged as "frustrated, grossly misgoverned and underperforming owing to the long absence of a visionary and effective leadership in Nigeria, (Ogunuga 2011) asserts that "sometimes, you cannot help but wonder if this country will ever cease being a weird canvas of tragic moments". Still, according to him, daily, the Nigeria nation struggle with many contradictions and self-inflicted agonies. Wanton destruction of lives through road carnages, infant mortality and a host of other issues that singularly constitute a collective nightmare in serious nations continue here without even being acknowledged by our leaders.

Also the inimitable noble Laureate and an accomplished wordsmith, Professor Wole Soyinka, has been unsparing in castigating what he termed the recurrent "cycle of human stupidity" by successive leadership of this fabled giant of Africa. He has severally, lampooned the widespread moral, physical, social and psychological degeneration of Nigeria. At another time, Soyinka publicly cast away in utter frustration, the National Award medal bestowed on him by the country. On another occasion, he bitterly deprecated the symbol of Nigerian nationhood as "that mangy, flea-infested flag that the sanctimonious nationalist drapes around his torso to cover a repulsive nudity".

The inference drawn from all of these is that we have become a country that seems to be occupied with engaging the throttle of our nation in reverse gear. We forage for fate in dark alleys and in a vast landscape of waste. The truth is never confronted with determination and sincerity to right the wrongs and make the society better. The characters that persistently provide us with this uniquely rudderless leadership have become the problem rather than the solution. We have become tied together by the cord of deceit and

very fraudulent and corrupt leaders whose hall-mark is developing under-development. The result is the multi-facet challenges that daily confronts the Nigeria nation today.

7.0 The Way Forward

Psychologists have noted that to redouble one's efforts is a healthy response to an obstacle. For Nigeria and the third world countries to survive as nations in this 21st century, we have to remain vigilant and intensify our efforts in areas of deficiency. Against this backdrop, this paper proffers the following way forward;

First, as a nation, a political ideology in Nigerian politics is imperative. The lack of political ideology in Nigerian politics is a serious problem. As a result, many politicians in Nigeria are known to have discounted the importance of ideology in politics and thus, tend to waffle on issues. Consequently, nobody is often held responsible for any policy failure in Nigeria. For our politician leaders to behave, we should device means to hold them responsible for their actions or in-actions and be accountable to the people.

Second, change is ubiquitous in any society, particularly in that which strives to fulfil human needs. It takes a committed leadership to accomplish a propitious change in a society. A thought on leadership as it relates to social change or development is vital to the development of Nigeria at this point in time. The importance of a self-critical leadership, good governance and transparency in state activities in Nigeria cannot be over emphasised. Leaders have duties to do. Gardner (1978) has pointed out that the task of leaders is to help societies "understand the problems that all must face, to aid in the setting of goals and priorities, to work with others in finding paths to those goals chosen, maintaining public morale, and motivation and nurturing a workable level of public unity". Leaders in Nigeria and the third world nations must help their people to know how they can be at their best. Leaders in this nation must activate existing institutions in pursuit of the society's goals and help redesign such institutions to achieve results. These functions they must perform within a framework of constraints which includes an uncorrupted electoral process, the rule of law, institutional checks and balances and a free press. Thirdly, it is imperative that Nigeria is re-structured into a mobile society, a nation where one could live in any state of his choice, secure employment at the state and local levels without limitations and participate meaningfully in the affairs of the community of his abode. More, the leaders of these nations should wage war on ethnicity and nepotism, which are inimical to the unity of this great nation. Also, politicians who are pandering to ethnic interests should be rejected at the polling booth while hard work, good skills and intelligence should be rewarded strictly on merits, without regard to ethnicity and religion. This is an option that could lead the nation to a stable development and greatness.

Fourthly, sound economic policies should be instituted to diversify the nation's mono-product economy. The diversification of the economy would help reduce Nigeria's dependence on the outside world for her basic needs and lend credibility to claims that the country could someday join the ranks of the world's greatest economy's, i.e., Vision 20:2020. With proper leadership in Abuja and all levels of administration within the nation, this can be achieved. This however, requires that people be formally educated, economic infrastructure e.g. basic transportation, communication, power facilities, constructed, capital accumulation maximised amongst others. Also, a strong ethic – to save and invest, to develop sophisticated skills, a highly educated and motivated work force is needed to survive and actualise the nation's goals. Political leadership from all facets of public administration is needed to achieve these.

Significantly, corruption, which has become widely known as the bane of Nigeria and several third world countries should be confronted frontally and with all sincerity by the current leadership of these nations. Many writers have often noted that corruption has probably become the only viable industry in Nigeria and several parts of the African continent. Dike (2008) agreed that the abysmal failure of military rule and previous civilian administrations is associated with huge corruption in the state and the economy. Because of corruption, our younger generations have not been able to experience a country that worked and more often than not, have been cultured within prejudiced frames about where the problems of our country have come from. As a result, there is a deepening level of ignorance, prejudice, anger bred by frustration and or led by ignorance and intolerance. Many of the killings, terrorist activities, ethno-religious violence, in Nigeria today, are a direct consequence of this festering sore of hatred as a consequence of the collapse of the Nigerian ruling class project. The leaders have a nuanced appreciation of the complexities of this problems and the multi-sided analysis needed to understand them, and have therefore, stayed at superficial levels of trite arguments for simplistic formulas as answers to all these gargantuan problems. To this end, a need exists for exemplary leadership, which is the bedrock of development.

8.0 Summary and Conclusion

Leaders make things happen; they are wave makers. A society without talented and committed leaders will retrogress or at best remain stagnant. That has been the problem with Nigeria. A careful examination of the attitude and behaviour of the leaders of post – colonial Nigeria shows that many of the civilian, as well as military leaders were mired in the pursuit of selfish personal goals at the expense of broader national interest or needs. In other words, they were ‘instrumental’ leaders or what David Apter called “consummatory” leaders. (Dike 2008).

Achebe (1983), earlier pointed out that “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership”. He pointed out that “there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character, there is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else”, but leadership. The lack of selfless, non – corrupt and committed leaders has contributed immensely to the socio – political and economic predicaments facing Nigeria today. Again, Nigeria has had many non – leaders in leadership seats. The disaster that marked the administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Babangida’s atrocious regime, and the horrible looting that occurred during the time of General Abacha are quick reminders. Again, the recent upsurge of crisis in Nigeria is an indication of the lack of virtuous leaders, leaders who are honest, who are persons of integrity and trust, in the government and business of the nation. It is to be noted that while leadership commitment is essential to the survival and progress of Nigeria, the people have an important role to play too.

But, the people’s commitment would be difficult to secure if the leaders who are calling on them for sacrifice do not themselves make any sacrifices. To stamp out corruption in the country, Nigerians should always elect or appoint people of probity to manage the affairs of the nation and hope for a better tomorrow. Chirot (1977) avers that “underdevelopment of a country is the result of its deficient value system and economic structure”. Consonant to these, the present socio-economic re-structuring in Nigeria should be pursued with speed and sincerity. That way, we shall get to that glorious prophetic place in destiny by being proactive, productive, creative, and innovative in our thinking and acting. Research and Development that will fast-forward and ignite development through creative, productive and innovative studies to all sectors of the economy should be diligently enshrined in our public administration and in the management of our enterprise.

On the whole, given the energy and creativity of Nigerians, it is possible to squeeze Nigeria into the G-20 and make it G-21. It is possible if Nigeria becomes a law and order nation, if we harness our agricultural potentials and develop a viable functional rail transport system with stable power supply. National development is not an accident. It is a product of law and order and the discipline they create. Development will not happen if we continue to indulge ourselves in sybaritic lifestyle as if we are a rich nation. Jason (2011) argues that doing so will amount to eating up our yam seedlings before the planting season. He noted the example of China that closed its door and ears to World Trade Organization, World Bank and IMF and put Chinese on the jobs in the rice fields and on road constructions. He advocates that we as a nation can benefit from this path.

From the foregoing discuss, it is to be acknowledged that an effective, focussed and honest leadership is a defining factor in the cutting – edge performance of any nation in this competitive century. Africa, Nigeria and third world nations cannot therefore, desire less.

9.0 Recommendations

In addressing the critical challenge of effective leadership in Nigeria, we must find the courage and the will to take our destiny in our own hands. The leadership must strive to gain the confidence of all relevant stake-holders at this critical moment of the nation.

Against this backdrop, the study makes the following recommendations:

- a critical paradigm shift is recommended. We must find the courage to review our history and legacy of leadership, governance and the administrative management of public affairs and commit ourselves to affect a paradigm shift.
- the rule of law must be a cardinal principle of any administration and the leadership in Nigeria.
- we must have the courage to make mistakes as they are inevitable in all serious undertakings. Alongside this, we must also have the tenacity and fortitude not to expect results in a day, a year or sometimes even in a decade. We must think, plan, act and expect in long-term strategies terms (Okpaku 2011).

- the entrenchment of core values in the polity would help to take the nation to a great height.
- while we retain the leadership role in the sub-region and play a leading role in the continent, the foreign policy direction should be used to propel economic development of our country. Our embassies and high commissions should be re-invented to promote investment and trade.
- for those empowered with the mandate to rule, the corresponding obligation is to ensure that the next four years make a qualitative difference in the lives of the people. This is because the real riots and crisis could break out across the nation if the sacrifices of the people do not result in benefits for them, their children and their community.
- also, quality followership should be pursued with all vigour as no nation can enjoy quality leadership if its followership is pathologically distrustful of its intention. We also need a value driven followership. People should not just remain fence sitters. They should not just blame the problems of the nation on leaders but should assume leadership in the fight for emancipation of the country from the claws of the cabals that have held her captive. It should be noted that for leadership to take its due place in Nigeria, our conception of leadership must move from rhetoric to application of correct values.
- the current level of unemployment in Nigeria which is officially put at 21 percent is alarming. The greatest threat to democracy, political stability and national development are the tensions and explosions usually provoked by mass unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and other consequences of economic and social dislocation. Therefore, it is suggested that because the most fundamental challenges which should define governance in the next decade lie in the management of the economy, the real challenge of economic management should be that of the creation of jobs, particularly skilled employments.
- Governments at all levels need to embark on fresh and more creative initiative to boost domestic production through stable and proactive macroeconomic policies, especially in the areas of interest rate and exchange rate management (Oshiomhole 2011).

Still, the lack of selfless, non-corrupt and committed leaders has contributed immensely to the socio-political and economic predicament facing Nigeria today. For the nation to move forward, the electoral reforms project should be concluded, the economy must be fixed, the protracted power crises must be addressed, transportation and high cost of governance must be addressed too. In addition, we must positively change our personal attitudes to be able to change the social structure. This is because according to (Allport 1979) "the structure is the product of the attitudes of many single people".

Finally, recommendations from the various probe panels in Nigeria since 1999 to date, i.e. Oputa panel, Inuwa Iguda panel on abandoned projects etc, should be revisited and implemented to curb corruption and moderate social discontent.

Lastly the current leadership of Nigeria under President Goodluck Jonathan must pursue issues of national development with sincerity and vigour. The people's enthusiasm and interest in the administration should not be allowed to die down. A forum for people to voice out dissent on controversial issues in the society and procedures under which ordinary citizens can sue for any infringement on their civil rights should be provided. More importantly, a general public sector reform is apropos. Reform here refers to large-scale and comprehensive change in the role, structure, values, staffing, or size of the public sector. This should involve privatizing all ill-managed government corporations. Services in the domain of inefficient and corrupt corporations should be contracted out to the private sector for greater efficiency and accountability. International blueprint in the process could be adopted, but it should be adjusted to meet local conditions.

As a final word, effective leadership is needed from all of Nigeria's leaders to achieve political stability and engender national development.

References

- Achebe, C. (1988). "The Trouble with Nigeria, Enugu": Fourth Dimension Publishers.
Allport, G.W. (1979). "The Nature of Prejudice"; 25th Anniversary Edition, Addison: Wesley Publishing Company.

- Bello-Iman, I.B. (2009). "The Power and Energy Conundrum in Nigeria: Which Way Forward?" in I.B. Bello-Iman and R.D. Abubakre (eds.) *Yar'Adua's Seven-Point Agenda An Assessment*, pp.20 – 49, Ilorin: AL-Hikmah University.
- Boone, L.E. and Kurtz, D.L. (1984). "Principles of Management", Second Edition, New York: Random House.
- Chiot, D. (1977). "Social Change In The Twentieth Century"; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.
- Dike, V. (2011). "Leadership, Politics, and Social Change: Nigeria and The Struggle For Survival, in Africa Economic Analysis, <file:///H:/leadershipinafrican.html> retrieved 12/9/2011.
- Gardner, J.W. (1978). "Morale", New York: W.N. Norton and Company.
- Jason, P. (2011). "The Road to 20 – 2020": Putting Nigerians on the Job, Vanguard Newspapers, August 30, p.17
- McGregor, D. (1960). "The Human Side of Enterprise", New York: McGraw-Hill
- Munroe, M. (1984). "Becoming A Leader Every One Can Do It, Lanham": Pneuma Life Publishing.
- Newstrom, J.W. and Bittel, L.R. (2007). *Supervision Managing for Results* Eight Edition, New York: McGraw Hill
- Nnanna, O. (2011). "Cameron: Should we Laugh or Cry?" Vanguard Newspapers, July 25, p.49.
- Nwachukwu, C.C. (1988). "Management: Theory and Practice", Onitsha: Africana –FEP Publishers Limited.
- Odunlami, I.S. (1999). "Media In Nigeria's Security and Development Vision, Ibadan": Spectrum Books Limited.
- Odunuga, Y. (2011). "It's Same Old Story", The Nation Newspaper, Saturday, August 6, p.57.
- Ogai, J.O. (2003). "Understanding Development", Owerri: New Generation Publishers.
- Okpaku, J. (2011). "50 years Later: Who governs Africa, how and to what end? Vanguard Newspaper, Friday, July, p.16
- Opubor, A.E. (1985). "Mass Communication and Modern Development in Nigeria". A Book of Reading, pp.183 – 200, Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Oshiomhole, A.A. (2011). "The Way forward for Jonathan" Vanguard Newspapers, May 18, pp.1,5.
- Oshionebo, B.O. and Ariyo, O.O. (2007). "Leadership and Effective Management of Human Resources" in Bello – Iman, I.B., Oshionebo, B.O. and Ojeifo, S.A. (eds.), *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management In Nigeria*; Ibadan: College Press and Publishers Limited.
- Oyedijo, A. (1995). *Principles of Management*, Ibadan: Paramount Books Ltd.
- Rodney, W. (1974). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bogle-L'ouverture Publications
- Usua, N.J. (2010). "Party Ideology, Political Campaign and the Media In Nigeria's Political Struggle" In Godwin B. Okon and Aniefiok Udoudo (eds.) *Political Communication and Nigerian Democracy: A Book of Reading* pp.24 – 36 Port – Harcourt: Amethyst and Colleagues Publishers.

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:**

<http://www.iiste.org/Journals/>

The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a fast manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

